

STATE OF MINNESOTA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FOURTH MEETING
EIGHTY-FIRST SESSION

ETHICS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Representative Elaine Harder, Chair of the Ethics Committee, reconvened the executive session at 9:15 a.m. on Wednesday, June 28, 2000, in Room 400N of the State Office Building.

The Clerk noted the roll.

Members present:

HARDER, Elaine, Chair
MILBERT, Bob, Co Chair
MURPHY, Mary

RHODES, Jim, Alternate

Members excused: DAVIDS, Greg, WAGENIUS, Jean, Alternate

A quorum was present.

Chair Harder explained the purpose of this meeting. Speaker Sviggum granted the Ethics Committee authorization to examine the house rules regarding speech and debate and to make recommendations for change.

Deb McKnight, House Research, outlined other states' legislative rules on decorum in debate and speech and debate clause in legislative ethics proceedings.

Committee identified two questions to be addressed.

The first question regards House Rule 2.31; when do you need to take exception. One suggestion includes changing House Rules 2.31 to read "OFFENSIVE WORDS IN DEBATE. If a member is called to order for offensive words in debate, the member calling for order must report the words to the which exception is taken and the Clerk must record them. A member must not be held to answer, or be subject to censure of the House, for language used in debate unless exception is taken before adjournment that session day."

The other question involves whether or not we need a mechanism to ensure that the Ethics Committee does not receive any complaints regarding speech on the House floor. One suggestion includes giving the ability to the Speaker of the House to not forward such cases to the Ethics Committee.

Committee agreed to meet with Chief Clerk, Ed Burdick to resolve questions prior to making any official recommendations.

The meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m.

REP. ELAINE HARDER, CHAIR



Sarah Berkowitz
Committee Legislative Assistant